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By Thomas Fitzgerald

INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Rep. John Adler (D.,N.J.) today pressed for legislation he co-wrote that would provide a one-time \$250 Social Security payment to senior citizens and disabled veterans to make up for the lack of a cost-of-living adjustment in benefits this year.

"I've been hearing from seniors throughout my district that they're having a harder and harder time making ends meet, especially with the property taxes they are paying," Adler, a member of the House Financial Services Committee, said in an interview. He held a news conference about the bill outside the regional Social Security Administration office in Philadelphia.

"We don't want a generation of seniors to slip back into poverty," Adler said.

The bipartisan bill is sponsored by Reps. Michael McMahon (D.,N.Y.), John Mica (R.,Fla.) and Bill Young (R.,Fla.).

It would cost \$8 billion to send the payments to Social Security recipients, and the bill calls for the money to come from funds already authorized, but not yet spent, from the federal economic stimulus bill.

Last year, the government also gave seniors and disabled veterans a \$250 relief check in the absence of a COLA. The Social Security Administration said that inflation was not high enough to justify an adjustment under their formula, but advocacy organizations argue that the costs of prescription drugs and Medicare premiums are increasing dramatically, pinching seniors.